

THE LEISURE HOUR.

BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,
MUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND.—*Crozier.*



A CALL ON MISS STIFFENS.

IDONEA.

CHAPTER XLIX.

Words are mighty, words are living,
Serpents with their venomous stings,
Or bright angels crowding round us,
With heaven's light upon their wings.

—*Adelaide Procter.*

"WILL you come with me and see Lady Dyke and her children?" said Mr. Dooner to Idonea, on the afternoon of the day following that
No. 1512.—DECEMBER 18, 1890.

on which she arrived in London. "You will then know if she is Madame Ronda, and I shall have a witness that I have performed my promise to her of reinstating her in her proper position. I saw her scoundrel of a husband this morning, who consents to lead a cat-and-dog life with her henceforth, rather than go to law."

Idonea gladly consented, expecting to see Madame Ronda, and her expectations seemed likely to be realised, for they drove to Mrs. Keene's. They were

PRICE ONE PENNY.

ushered by Mary into the first-floor drawing-room, and Idonea looked eagerly at the lady who was seated near the fire, her back to the door, her feet on the fender. When she rose, Idonea perceived that she was a stranger. Then where was Madame Ronda?

"I have brought Miss Umfreville to see you, Lady Dyke," began Mr. Dooner.

"The young lady to whom I ought to be so much indebted," replied Lady Dyke, curtsying to Idonea. "I have had the pleasure of meeting your brother more than once in my double characters of Mrs. Gore and Miss Welborn," she laughed, unpleasantly.

"I should not have intruded, only I thought, seeing your little girls, that you might be Madame Ronda," stammered Idonea, nervously.

"I am delighted to be able to thank you personally for the part you have played in the fourth act of my little drama; the fifth has yet to be performed," rejoined Lady Dyke.

"I saw Sir Richard Dyke this morning," here broke in Mr. Dooner. "He promises to take a course immediately for you and the children, if you resolve not to go abroad, which under all circumstances would seem the preferable course."

"Thank you, I have had enough of foreign parts with him, and prefer settling in this country. He did me the honour of calling on me this morning, and took the children away with him to see some show or other. You have made him wonderfully submissive, Mr. Dooner, or your daughter has."

"I have performed my promise to you, Lady Dyke, and given the world sufficient reason for the breaking off of my daughter's marriage. I leave you and your husband to account for your long separation."

"That is easily done," said Lady Dyke, nonchalantly. "He chose to leave me, and I followed him, my children being in the care of Madame Ronda. She in turn followed us, and therefore, when I wrote to Florence for my little girls, she and they had quitted the place. It was a wildgoose chase on all sides. I went on the stage, partly to gain a livelihood, partly in the hope of discovering these, my belongings, but failed entirely, until I was struck by the advertisements for a Mrs. Gore. These were the instruments in restoring me to the honoured rank of a married woman, and therewith the unexpected title of 'your ladyship.'"

These words were spoken with careless scorn.

"And where is Madame Ronda?" asked Idonea, eagerly.

"I am not at liberty to say, but a few lines from her came to me this morning, which must have crossed my letter to her, conveying the amazing intelligence of the affectionate reunion of Sir Richard and Lady Dyke."

"But she left this house nearly a fortnight ago," urged Idonea, heedless of the scoffing manner of the injured wife.

"Yes. She remained with me while Mr. Dooner was working up his transformation-scene, and turning the Flying Dutchman into the pattern Benedict," returned Lady Dyke, bowing to Mr. Dooner.

Idonea scarcely knew which would be most severely punished by the reunion—the faithless husband or the imperious wife. She wished neither of them ill, but she foresaw a life-long retribution for each, in life-long recrimination.

"At least I am glad that I have helped to effect this reunion before it was too late," said Mr. Dooner, gravely, as he motioned to Idonea that it was time to go. He presently rose, and, thinking of his own daughter, shook Lady Dyke's hand warmly, while he wished her good-bye. He knew he had done a righteous work, whether its end were fair or foul.

They met Sir Richard on the stairs, with the children. Idonea fancied that the mother wished to make a confidante of her, but she avoided all interposition between husband and wife, and hastened down. The gentlemen went into Neville's parlour to complete their unpleasant business, and she joined Mrs. Keene, who was waiting for her.

Mrs. Keene told her that Lady Dyke had taken possession of Madame Ronda's apartment after she left, and that her marriage subsequently evolved. She had recognised her, but knew nothing of Madame Ronda.

While they were talking there were high words passing in Neville's parlour, but when the gentlemen came out, they appeared tolerably self-possessed—Sir Richard more so than the offended Mr. Dooner.

"You will shake hands? we may never meet again," he said to Idonea with assumed *sang froid*. She gave him her hand, and he wrung it so fiercely that she knew not whether it were love or hate. She looked after him as the carriage drove off, and perceived that he did not return to the house.

"Patched up for the present," said Mr. Dooner. "Now they must fight it out between them. He dares not draw back, for I have the whip-hand of him. I hope Charlotte will find out what a lucky escape she has had, for he never cared a button for her. I shall get no credit from any one. Nobody ever does who meddles in matrimonial and love affairs. I only wish Charlotte were well married."

With which paternal conclusion, and having eased his conscience, he leaned back in his carriage and fell asleep. He was happy in having this panacea for all his troubles. But when they reached Queen's Gate he found a telegram from Boulogne.

"Why can't people wait for the post? Telegrams only complicate matters. I wish I had lived a century ago," he said, irritably, as he opened it. "Charlotte worse. Come at once," he read aloud to Idonea.

Poor Mr. Dooner was the victim of his own easy nature. When too late, he found that he ought to have looked a little more narrowly into his home affairs while spending his energies in making his millions in the City. It does not always do to sleep in your own house, even if you are wide awake in your office. "One eye in the fields, the other in the town," is a sensible French proverb.

Mr. Dooner was much annoyed at being now called upon to have one eye also in a foreign country; nevertheless, he ordered his portmanteau to be packed, and started at once for Boulogne, telling Idonea to remain where she was until his return, which would be on the morrow, if possible.

He did not, however, come back until the third day after his departure, and Idonea spent the time anxiously, expecting letters from home, but none arrived. She sadly missed Lina, and felt very lonely in the large empty house.

When Mr. Dooner returned he dined, and went to the schoolroom, where he found her awaiting him. Idonea saw at once that he brought good news; for he rubbed his hands cheerfully over the fire, and patted

her on the back, with "A good girl, a very good girl; always to be found when one wants you." Her face showed her anxiety, and he was not long in gratifying it.

"Charlotte is better," he began. "'Like cures like,' and I gave her such a dose of her amiable deceiver that she'll get the better of her complaint if I'm not mistaken. I flatter myself I had the best of it for once. I made her stop her tantrums and listen to me. I just told her from beginning to end everything Sir Richard Dyke has done and said since the discovery of his marriage, thanks to you, my dear. I can tell you, I coloured up our visit to his wife pretty highly, till my picture was quite Turneresque. When she found that the mean wretch was as indifferent to her as to his wife, she cheered up a little. A good sign, thought I. But when I informed her that he was going to take a house in London, and begin life with his devoted family, just as if nothing had happened, her pride was roused, for she hadn't expected that.

"Did he send me no message, no apology?" she asked.

"Not a word," said I. "He didn't care a pin for you; he only wanted a good slice of my money, and you ought to be thankful that he hasn't got it, but that I have, and that I keep it for some better man."

"Of course she went off into hysterics, as disappointed women always do; but I took the law into my own hands, and told her that she would bring disgrace on herself if she made such a fool of herself about a married man. In short, I managed to arouse her pride, and by degrees the hysteria calmed, and she turned as white and calm as stone. This frightened me, and I began to fear both for health and mind. But both were stronger than I fancied.

"I am better, I will dress for dinner," she said, and she joined us at table. This was yesterday, and this morning she was apparently much as she used to be. What do you say to that?"

Mr. Dooner looked at Idonea for her opinion.

"That you have done more than any one else," she said.

"She did not mention you," continued Mr. Dooner, "so even Lina thinks you had better not rejoin them just yet. I have promised to take you over to Lina when they are settled, for the pet cannot live without you."

"I am expecting to hear from my mother as to what she wishes me to do," said Idonea.

"You must stay and take care of me till they are settled at Mentone," rejoined Mr. Dooner. "A very proud woman that mother of yours, who doesn't know which side her bread is buttered. What made her write and refuse Duke?"

"I asked her to do so," replied Idonea.

"Then you were a goose, for he had my consent; and now I shouldn't be surprised if he were to propose for Lady Clementina Harley, who would be too wise to refuse him with her train of younger sisters. Would you mind my taking a nap here?"

Idonea did not mind, and Mr. Dooner was soon fast asleep in Lina's easy-chair. She could not help wondering how one so overwhelmed with the business of making and keeping money, and the anxiety of looking after those who spent it, could slumber in a moment so peacefully. But the wrinkles of the day seemed to smooth away beneath the wand of evening, and the kindly rosy face looked as if its owner had never known work or weeping.

"I suppose it is well to be rich and successful, and that labour is its own reward," thought Idonea. "Certainly one would think that Mrs. Dooner alone would counteract the satisfaction; but he does not feel it. I wonder whether I ought to have accepted Duke? His father and my mother's consent would almost appear to make it a duty—but yet, I could not. If only it had been! . . . How foolish I am! I, a poor, penniless girl, with brothers and sisters to bring up somehow, and he?—Well; I am sure he would not think of this; but he does not care for women; at least he says so, though he is really more polite and chivalrous than any one I have seen. I sometimes fancied he liked me a little—then that he almost disliked me. If he admired any one it was Lina; but perhaps even that was pity for her delicacy of health; and she, poor child, is always talking of Percy. How intricate and unsatisfactory things are! One contradicting another, and no two events, inclinations, or individuals born twins."

Whether it was Mr. Dooner's mellifluous snore, or the fire-warmth, or the influence of mind over matter, is difficult to determine, but Idonea also fell asleep, and was soon wandering amid the intricate labyrinth of dreams.

CHAPTER I.

Joys as winged dreams fly fast,
Why should sadness longer last?
Grief is but a wound to woe:

Gentlest fair, mourn, mourn no more.

—Beaumont and Fletcher

THE following morning Idonea had a letter from Percy. It seemed to her brief and disconnected, and no wonder, for he avoided the subject on which his thoughts ran from morning till night. He did not even mention Clarina, either as Madame Ronda or in her true character. He had not yet learnt that she was not a married woman, and his mind was still troubled concerning her state. He told Idonea that his mother wished her to remain where she was until she was informed of Miss Charlotte's condition, but she was not to go abroad again without her consent. "Indeed," he said, "you will probably be recalled; for mother accuses herself of neglect for having allowed you to leave home at all." He concluded his letter by asking her to go, if possible, to see Mr. and Mrs. Somerville and Miss Stiffens, and to ask for an extension of his holiday.

As soon as she had read her letter, she told Mr. Dooner of her brother's request. She was, at the moment, making breakfast for him. He bade her get ready at once, and accompany him to the City by Metropolitan Railway. She did so, nothing loth; and when they reached the terminus he walked with her to Mr. Somerville's, and left her there, promising to call for her in the afternoon. Mr. and Mrs. Somerville were delighted to see her, and made her feel at home at once. Percy's request was readily granted, for Mr. Somerville had procured efficient help during his absence.

"I wish he had a good living, my dear, much as I should grieve to lose him," said that excellent man. "He deserves one; but clerical preferment is slow and capricious, and often passes the most devoted servant by. However, the Master knows best."

"We had charming letters from your younger brothers and sisters, my dear, in return for our small Christmas presents," said Mrs. Somerville. "Your

mother must be a wonderful woman to have taught them to write and express themselves so well."

Praise of those she loved always brought a flush of pleasure to Idonea's cheeks, and joy to her soul; and her kind friends remarked afterwards that she was handsomer than ever, and not spoiled by the world.

She knew her way about that neighbourhood, so went alone to Miss Stiffens's. She was recognised by the crossing-sweeper and two or three other people, all of whom inquired when the curate was coming back. She found Miss Stiffens at her door, talking with angry dignity to some poor woman who was also inquiring for Percy. She slipped a sixpence into the woman's hand, and shook Miss Stiffens's, who forgot her displeasure at sight of her.

"Well, Miss Umfreville, I am thankful to see you. I hope your brother will soon be back, for there is no peace from morning to night. But I tell the profligates and drunkards, and all the rest of 'em, that I hope he won't come back for months, for they've worried the life out of him. When he do come it won't be Sarah Stiffens's fault if the vagabonds aren't forbid his chamber. He'd a-been dead and buried of fever, smallpox, or worse, but for me a-opening of the winders and purerfying the rooms. And I kep' hundreds off as it was. Do come in and see father, Miss Umfreville. Your brother's winders are wide open, and you may find his apartment cold."

"Well, to be sure, miss; I'm glad to see you," said old Stiffens from behind his paper, with a spasmodic cough. "What do the curate think of the times now? I says they're hawful! I haven't had any one as understands pollyticks to argur with since he left, but if these aren't the last days they never were, says I. Wars and rumours of wars, famine and pestilences, drunkenness, and all sorts."

Mr. Stiffens, exhausted by his unusual exertions, coughed violently, and sipped a potion that his daughter provided for him, and which they had frequently assured Percy, when he preached teetotalism, was only "lemon and honey, with just a flavour of rum, which was soothing for the chest."

Meanwhile Idonea sat down in the dark little room, and told Miss Stiffens that Percy's leave of absence had been extended.

"I should a-thought three weeks or a month enough for any Christian gentleman as is interested in his parish and his 'ome," she said. "I never had more than a day's holiday at a time in all my life, and yet I've seen the country, for I've been to Kew Gardens and the Welsh Harp."

"You have your father always with you, and my brother has not seen my mother for three or four years," said Idonea. "How I wish you could pay us a visit. Perhaps you may some day. Then you would really see the country."

"I am sure I should be very pleased, Miss Umfreville," said the amiable Sarah.

When they had visited Percy's rooms together, Idonea returned to the Rectory, where she dined. Mrs. Somerville invited her to spend Christmas with her, which was now fast approaching, but Idonea said she was uncertain as to her mother's plans for her, and was anxiously awaiting orders. She had, indeed, a longing to be once more at home for Christmas with all those she loved best. But she felt that if she once let go her hold on her present position she might say farewell to it for ever, and therewith her salary, so necessary to all.

Mr. Dooner called for her according to promise, and they returned together to Queen's Gate. She at once wrote to Percy, giving him a full account of her day in the City, as well as of her visit to Lady Dyke. She laid great stress on the non-appearance of Madame Ronda, and also asked, casually, if he had seen Mr. Fairborn, concluding by saying that she had hoped for long letters overflowing with news, and had received nothing but circulars and bulletins.

While Idonea was writing, her mother and Percy were discussing what would be best for her to do, the former giving it as her decided opinion that she should not be left at Queen's Gate, the latter suggesting that it would be unkind to remove her inconsiderately. Truth to tell, Percy wished to see Neville and Clarina again before deciding, for they had not met since the first *éclaircissement*. He therefore borrowed Mr. Timmins's horse, placed at his disposal by that kind man, and rode to Heronshill.

Neville was out, and he was shown to the library, where he found Clarina, who greeted him as in the old, old times, and on whose bright face he saw no remains of the Madame Ronda of Mrs. Keene's.

"You seem as much better as—as I do," he blurted out.

"I ought to look well, for Neville is so kind—so good!" she replied. "Is he the Neville we used to know, or is he somebody else? He is so different."

"Circumstances alter us all," said Percy, gazing with astonishment at Clarina's metamorphosed appearance.

"They do; they do," she said, and the sadness of the Ronda face succeeded the brightness of the Clarina.

There was a pause, during which he sat down and she took up some kind of work, which soon dropped from her fingers as she began to speak impulsively. "Neville says that both you and he believed me Lady Dyke," she said. "You must have thought me lost, indeed, to have married such a man. But I gave you reason to believe anything."

Here her face flushed and her eyes drooped, but she did not cease speaking until she had poured forth, with strange rapidity, the story of her life which she had previously told to her brother. Percy listened with shaded eyes and quickly-beating heart. He put no question, for he could not speak. She did not look at him, but let her words flow as they would. When they ceased she glanced up. She saw only two quivering lips beneath the veiling hand, and wondered if it were pity or shame for her folly that made them quiver. She held out her hands appealingly, but he did not see the movement.

"Why did you not discover yourself to Idonea or to me when you were so ill and lonely?" he asked, with a broken voice.

"I could not because of all that had been said of me, deserved and undeserved," she replied.

"And yet I had been seeking you all these years," he rejoined. "You might have trusted me, who knew you so well, and who—"

Here Percy's words were broken by what seemed a sob, and she, gazing at him with strained eyes, clasped her hands and half rose in her longing to hear what he did not dare to speak.

"But you knew me too well, and I feared you might reproach me for the sorrow I had caused," she said, humbly.

"Oh, Clarina! did I ever reproach you? When you were wildest and most intractable I still—Well,

you were ever my dear if wayward pupil. And oh! when you left us I thought my heart would break."

Clarina fancied she saw a tear ooze through the long, thin fingers, as a shudder seemed to move the nervous frame. She could with difficulty restrain herself from falling at his feet. If only he would look at her, she thought, she might understand him better. But the recollection of the day when, in one of her most passionate moods, she had as good as told him that she loved him was vivid as ever, and she dreaded to recall that untutored act to his mind. He remembered it but too well, and feared to recall it as much as she.

At last, slowly removing his hand from before his face, he suddenly met her eyes. So had she looked years before, when, in her ardent youth and under strong excitement, she said those words they both wished unsaid.

"Clarina!" he ejaculated.

And she in turn covered her face and sobbed.

"If only you knew how I have watched and waited for you!" he continued, no longer able to restrain his feelings. "When every one else had forgotten you, I was always seeking you, like a blind man groping in the dark, yet ever groping for what I failed to find. Oh, Clarina! why did you not write to me, who would have shared my last crust thankfully with you?"

"I could not; I dared not," she sobbed.

A constancy, the work of years, may be told in a few words, but fancy or memory can alone retrace a period of life past yet unforgotten. One or two short sentences sufficed to reveal heart to heart of these twain, but no speech could tell what they had endured since they parted without explanation or farewell.

Clarina was the first to speak again. Sickness had taught her humility, and she fancied that his tender words had been spoken to the old pupil, and not to the restored friend.

"I think I should have made myself known when Idonea came to my lodging, but I had not the courage," she said, looking into the fire. "And when my landlord said that I must leave, I did not know where she was. I might have written to you, but—I did not—I could not. I went to Mrs. Keene as a last resource, but finding that she did not recognise me, I let things be, dreading lest she should write to my stepmother; dreading, I know not what. It was all pride—pride. But I have learnt that there is One who humbles our pride and brings us back to nature and to Him by strange paths. Snatched as it were from death, I pray to begin a new life."

Clarina's manner was so affecting, that Percy found no words of comment. Both were silent with a silence stronger than speech. Neither suspected what the other felt, and the feelings of each were too deep for a commonplace remark. The love of years was in their hearts, but the one knew not the thoughts of the other.

They knew not how long this silence might have lasted, had it not been broken by the entrance of Neville. They both rose hastily, and while Percy greeted Neville she left the room.

"I was just thinking of you," began Neville. "I want you all to come and spend Christmas with us. Will you persuade your mother? We will kill the ox for the poor, and the fatted calf for ourselves, to celebrate Clarina's return. I would make every one as happy as I am. I wish your sister were at home,

and not in exile, and that she also could rejoice with me over my 'sheep that was lost.' And is she not a very loveable sheep, in spite of her wanderings?"

He glanced with a sort of playful inquisitiveness at Percy, whose face worked strangely as he answered "Yes."

Then Neville continued gravely,

"She has pastures of her own, my friend. She needed not to run away from my poor mother, for at one-and-twenty she would have come into her own mother's ample fortune, which has been accumulating for her ever since. I need not say that I have not touched it. I do not want to get rid of her, although I am not much accustomed to be honoured by the company of ladies; but, Percy, forgive me if I am plain-spoken—the living of Heronsburn will soon be vacant. It is yours if you will; in short, prevail on your mother to spend Christmas with us; and, if I may be allowed to suggest, I think Queen's Gate is scarcely a proper place for your sister. Our experience of the 'unprotected female' is not happy. Excuse me a moment."

Before Percy could understand, much less answer, this somewhat confused speech, Neville had left him. He went to Heatherton, and bade her tell Miss Fairborn that he would be glad to speak to her. She came at once.

"You must not run away from us, Clarina," he said. "Pray come into the library."

He led the way, and she was obliged to follow. He made one or two little remarks, then suddenly remembered that he had an order to give, and hurried away, promising to return in a few minutes.

"Perhaps thirty may suffice," he said to himself as he walked into the hall, took up his hat, and looked at his watch. "If I had it to do, which I never shall, I think five would be enough for me. I would rather she stayed here, but one mustn't be selfish; and if only they would take to the old Rectory it would not be like losing her again. If they come together after all, I shall begin to believe that 'marriages are made in heaven.' One searches, finds, and loses! What a medley it all is."

With which philosophical reflection he wandered off, leaving his sister and his friend to their own devices.

CURIOSITIES OF COMMERCE AND TRADE.

THE POULTRY TRADE.

IT is rather a curious thing that—so far at least as we are able to learn—no successful attempt has as yet been made to rear poultry on a large scale. There have been attempts of the kind, but they have invariably proved failures. There was a large poultry farm set up some years ago at Wimbledon, and at the outset everything looked like a certain success. It proved, however, rather a disastrous enterprise.

Another more recent attempt was made at Bromley, in Kent. The "National Poultry Company" secured there a piece of ground and set up a building specially for the breeding of poultry. A "home" was erected 360 feet in length, replete with everything—with one exception—which experience and forethought could suggest for the health and comfort of the occupants. There were feeding-troughs and fountains, inner "runs" and outer "runs," with farm-yard straw manure to enable the birds to exercise themselves in their favourite pastime of scratching.

The floor was of dry pulverised earth intended to deodorise refuse and keep the air pure, and there was a furnace to keep it warm. There was everything, in fact, but abundant space in the open air. It was thought that if the air could be kept pure—as it appears to have been—there was no reason why fowls should not be as healthy and productive in a number of small pens as in a farmyard, and had the one building erected proved successful it was intended to cover six acres of ground with similar ranges, the intervening spaces being utilised as a market garden, to which the fowls were to contribute manure in exchange for green food. It seems to have been a well-planned scheme, and so far as grown birds were concerned was fairly successful. The old birds could be maintained in health, but it was found impossible to rear chickens satisfactorily under the system, and the enterprise had to be abandoned with heavy loss. That seems to have been the fate of all attempts to farm poultry on a large scale.

The best authorities—some of them, at any rate—seem to be of opinion that it is useless to attempt to keep fowls well without abundant space. They must have, they tell us, somewhere about an acre of suitable ground for every hundred birds. The consequence of this practical necessity is that there are no great centres of the poultry trade—so far, at least, as the breeding and rearing is concerned. The supplies that come into the principal London markets—Leadenhall Market and the new Central Market in Smithfield, which may be considered as fairly representative of all others—are drawn from innumerable small sources. There are, of course, large farms and estates which contribute very considerable consignments of various kinds of poultry, but there are none which are devoted to the production of poultry as their main business, and our supply would be lamentably short but for the cottagers and other small producers, who send up their tiny contributions to the public table from all sorts of out-of-the-way corners—many of them having evidently only the most rudimentary ideas of business matters. Walk through either of the great markets, with their tons upon tons of poultry, and you may everywhere see laid together a dozen or two of dead birds, which will represent the whole consignment of some villager in Sussex or Surrey or Kent. Examine one of the scraps of paper tucked in between them and you will find it a singularly primitive invoice. It is difficult to represent these commercial documents in type, as the reproduction is necessarily wanting in those little caligraphic eccentricities which, combined with novel modes of spelling, always impart such a charm to manuscript of any kind. Here, however, is one, so far as it can be given, names, of course, being fictitious: “sur i send You 4 tin chicens For sail i am yours Obidentli james Morgan.” This, it will be seen, is an invoice for fourteen chickens, the plump, well-developed condition and delicate white skin of which show that the consignor is a far better hand at poultry-rearing than at commercial penmanship. Here is another, on a ragged scrap of blue ruled paper: “Mister Cook Sir pleas reseve 26 pulits frum me & hop you Will mak it A good pris i Am yours humbel sernt. William Thompson.”

Thousands of small consignments such as these, either directly or through the agency of “higgler,” find their way into Leadenhall and Smithfield, which, from half-past five in the morning to about half-past nine, present scenes of bustle and confusion from

which persons who are very sensitively constituted had better perhaps keep away. A good deal of the London poultry supply comes through the hands of the egg merchant without appearing on either of the markets. With this limitation it may be said that these two centres divide between them the wholesale trade of the metropolis—a trade of which some faint idea may be conveyed by stating that one line of railway alone—the Great Eastern—brought into London during the year, between August, 1879, and August, 1880, no less than 3,500 tons of poultry. This line draws traffic from Essex, Norfolk, and Suffolk, and last December brought in within the four weeks 539 tons, much of which consisted of geese and turkeys. The rearing and trading in geese have undergone great changes of late years. As might very well be supposed, the Fen countries were at one time famous for the immense numbers of birds they contributed to the public supply; indeed, all up the eastern coast—in Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridge, Lincoln, and Yorkshire—they were formerly bred in vast numbers. From one cause and another—principally, no doubt, owing to the extensive draining of the land on this coast—the breeding of geese has almost died out; at all events, it is trivial now compared with what it was. Even the famous Norwich goose, which is still known by name and highly appreciated, is in most cases no longer a genuine native of Norfolk. They are brought over by thousands from the Continent, kept in the neighbourhood of Norwich for a few weeks, and, when properly fattened, are passed on to the markets as naturalised Britons—genuine “Norwich geese.” We understand that near Colchester there are establishments which make it their special business to import and fatten Dutch geese. Germany also sends us large numbers of geese to be fattened and put upon the market as English-bred birds.

While speaking of imported geese, we may as well say a word or two on such importations generally. Our continental neighbours have hitherto been much more energetic and successful in the breeding of poultry than ourselves. In the north of France and Pomerania the natives very frequently make it their chief business to rear birds for the markets, though there, as it is here, they have no large poultry farms, but a well-organised system of sending poultry of all kinds to market from cottagers and small agriculturists all over the country. We get fowls from these parts in great quantities, and about Christmas time vast numbers of geese are imported. The French are also now turning their attention to the turkey, which in their hands is now rivaling the birds that have hitherto been reared to perfection only in Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire. A leading firm of dealers in poultry and game, to whom we are indebted for many of our facts,* inform us that the importation of turkeys from France is rapidly increasing, and that the birds are of fine size and excellent quality. The principal supply comes through Honfleur. The geese come mostly from Sarthe. Of the latter birds, as it has been said, we import great numbers from Holland and Germany, and of late years even America and Canada have sent us some very good birds about Christmas time; but it is thought that, except in very dear seasons, the speculation cannot have been very remunerative. Moreover, the geese have been frozen in order to preserve

* Messrs. Brook Brothers, of the Central Market, Smithfield.

them, and this is thought to have damaged their flavour.

From one quarter and another our imports have been very considerable. We cannot tell precisely what the poultry alone amounts to. All official statistics for this country combine poultry and game under one head, and the best we can do is to deal with the two together, so far as figures go. The latest official report shows that in 1877 the value of game and poultry brought into this country was just upon £320,000. How rapidly the importation is on the increase will be seen by going back a few years. In 1858 the whole value under these heads came to about £59,000. From that year there was an annual increase, until the total amounted in 1866 to about £175,000. The sum fluctuated for two or three years; but in 1872 it had become upwards of £217,000, from which it rose in successive years to £257,389, £270,264, £328,044, £297,018, and became, as we have said, £320,000 in 1877. This would not be a very startling sum for many kinds of imports, but when it is borne in mind that this £320,000 is paid out of the country when it might be distributed among English farmers and villagers, if they would only give a little intelligent attention to the matter, it becomes rather an important item for consideration.

There can be no question that every penny of this sum paid out for fowls, ducks, turkeys, and geese, might, at all events, just as well go to help Irish farmers and peasantry out of their difficulties. A little intelligence and care in breeding and management, and Ireland might well supply all our wants in this way. We do already derive the bulk of our supplies from Ireland, which, according to a very elaborate census taken not long ago, seems to be pretty well stocked. This showed that there were at the time enumeration was made nearly fourteen million birds—either fowls, ducks, turkeys, or geese—in Ireland. Cork stands at the head of the list with 94,000 turkeys, 223,500 geese, 158,700 ducks, and 650,000 fowls. Of the four divisions of the country, Munster had most turkeys and geese, and it is from this part of the world that our Christmas tables are chiefly supplied. In Munster there were found considerably over a quarter of a million of turkeys and over 800,000 geese. Ducks were most numerous in the north of Ireland, where, in Ulster, just upon a million were found, and over two million and a half of fowls, large quantities of which find their way into our markets at all seasons of the year. It was computed that, reckoning geese and turkeys at only 3s. each, and ducks and fowls at 2s. 6d. per pair, the poultry in Ireland at the time this enumeration was made—that is, in 1877—was worth £1,109,698. It is very satisfactory to learn that this branch of husbandry in Ireland seems to be making great progress and improvement. The class of poultry bred there is of a higher quality than it used to be, and the quantity exported is increasing. From December to April we get a very large portion of our supplies from that country, and all the year round more or less of it. When it can be brought home to the peasantry of Ireland that poultry-rearing is, if properly managed, a very profitable enterprise, it will, no doubt, materially affect the general prosperity of the country.

We get some poultry in our markets from Devonshire. Cornwall and Dorsetshire, both of which might be supposed to be rather prolific in this way, are said to be represented to only a very small

extent, and what they send is, we understand, only of an inferior quality. That is a very important matter indeed, and the one in which cottagers, farmers, and others so often make the mistakes which render poultry-keeping on any scale unprofitable. They are not sufficiently judicious in the selection of their breeds, and in the manner in which they fatten and prepare for market. They will not take the trouble to understand the peculiarities of particular breeds, or how they should be dealt with. Here, again, is a row of fowls that may have been all very well in their day, but, like a good many men, they lived too long for their posthumous credit. Had they died younger all men would have spoken well of them. "It cannot be too strongly impressed," says Mr. Tegetmeier, "upon those who are desirous of obtaining fowls of first-rate quality, that they are in perfection for the table only before they have attained their full development."

The very best of chickens and fowls that find their way into the London markets are from Sussex and Surrey, and some parts of Kent. There is one district in Sussex lying within a radius of eighteen or twenty miles which, during three months in the year, sends into the metropolis £1,500 worth a week. There are no large establishments here, but the villagers throughout the district devote a good deal of their time and attention to the subject, and, as in most other parts, "higglers" go round to farms and cottages collecting poultry alive, and then killing and preparing it for the market. This preparation is a very important matter, and as these men acquire great skill and experience, and understand exactly how the thing should be done, the exercise of their skill adds a premium to the value sufficient to repay them for their trouble.

This part of the country—Surrey and Sussex—has owed much of its reputation for first-rate poultry-breeding to its celebrated Dorking fowls, the original introducer of which died not a great while ago at an advanced age. The success of the people in these parts seems to be due mainly to their having a good breed of fowls and understanding the business. So far as we are aware there are no very novel forms of enterprise in Surrey and Sussex poultry-rearing. Cramming machines, for instance, have not, so far as we know, been adopted in this part of the country, though the practice of cramming is no doubt as common here as elsewhere. It is an objectionable practice in any form, because it is a violation of natural law, and there can be no doubt that it must tend to engender disease and suffering in birds just as excessive feeding usually engenders disease and suffering in the owners of birds. This unfortunately is a consideration, however, not very likely to weigh much either with those who rear fowls or those who eat them. A little extra profit or a trifling gratification of the palate is too often allowed to put considerations of humanity quite in the background; witness the great, and, we regret to say, the steadily increasing consumption of "pâtes de foie gras" in this and other "civilised" countries. The treatment of geese for the production of this "delicacy" not only tends to engender disease, but is designed to produce it. The wretched birds are hung up in bags for weeks in warm rooms, and periodically stuffed with grain mixed with antimony moistened with water and charcoal until the whole body is choked up with hardly anything but liver. This diseased enlargement of the organ is the object aimed at, and

thousands of seemingly humane and intelligent people—most of them, we fear, knowing well what they are doing, for it has been made known and denounced incessantly of late years—are able to enjoy this brutal manufacture. Cramping and fattening, as ordinarily practised in this country, and perhaps elsewhere, is not to be compared with the production of "pâtes de foie gras." Either by hand or by a machine, if done skilfully, it is not a painful process, and the birds, we believe, soon come to approve of it and look for it. By hand it is done by putting a little knob of food on to the end of a stick and thrusting it down into the crop. Machines have been devised by which it may be done with much greater rapidity. But even when the use of the machine is free from objection, the close confinement of creatures endowed with legs and wings and the strongest love of roaming, is of course cruel. There are other practices, too frequent, still more to be condemned. We have before us particulars of several instances in which the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals have recently—as they are always doing—obtained convictions for plucking live poultry, cruelly tying the legs of fowls, carrying them with their heads hanging down, crowding them into baskets too small for them, and so forth. Much suffering is inevitable even with every care to prevent it. Live birds in transit from Ireland, for instance, are well known to suffer from sea-sickness in rough weather, and long journeys in close confinement with or without water and food necessarily involve a deal of suffering. Too much care cannot be taken to reduce such suffering to a minimum, and to avoid everything like needless infliction of pain.

We have omitted as yet any mention of one very interesting branch of the poultry trade—the breeding of Aylesbury ducks. The fame of these birds is certainly very widely spread and firmly established. It is computed that somewhere about £30,000 a year is paid into Aylesbury and its neighbourhood for its ducks, and in the spring time it is no unusual thing for a ton weight of young ducklings to be dispatched to London in a single night from Aylesbury and the villages around. This will probably mean that about 225 couples of birds from six to eight weeks old are often sent to the wholesale market daily at a time of year when they will realise there from fifteen to twenty shillings a couple. If we reckon them at fifteen shillings, this means that £160 a day is often paid into this one district for poultry. This perhaps does not look a very imposing sum, but here again it must be borne in mind that Aylesbury ducks are not the produce of large establishments, but this £160 a day, or taking one season with another, £30,000 a year, goes to individuals whose breeding stock averages only about six-and-twenty birds. Mr. Fowler, of Aylesbury, in a very interesting account of the trade, says that the "duckers," as the breeders are called, are for the most part labourers who have saved up money enough to secure an independence from downright hard work, and who do not grudge giving their whole time and attention to the young brood so long as the supply is in demand.

About October these "duckers" begin their collection of eggs, which they obtain from cottagers who keep perhaps four ducks and a drake, and who will frequently get twelve shillings per dozen for their eggs. They are never hatched by the duck, but

always by hens, each of which, if a good-sized bird of the Dorking or Cochinchina breed, will cover thirteen eggs. When the young ducklings are a few days old, three or four broods are put together with one hen, and are kept in hovels or cottage rooms, each lot of thirty or forty being separated by low boards. It is no uncommon thing, we are told, to see 2,000 or 3,000 young ducks thus partitioned off. Those intended for market are never allowed to go into the water at all, but such as are intended for breeding purposes are permitted to take to brooks or ponds, or the River Thame, when about three weeks old. The different owners' birds are allowed to mingle freely, but the snowy white of the plumage is distinctively marked by large patches of red, green, black or blue paint on the head, neck, or wings. They are separated at night, driven to their respective homes, and well fed and warmly housed. From October till June the cottagers find a ready sale for their eggs, and indeed they often supply them to the "duckers" on a contract price for the whole season. The season for Aylesbury ducks in the market begins soon after the new year, and may be said to end with July, the highest price being attained about the middle of March, when a guinea a couple is not an unusual figure for the wholesale price. After that the price steadily declines.

The points of the Aylesbury duck—for which the neighbourhood has been famous for more than a century—are very marked and distinctive. They are wonderfully hardy, and are said to thrive almost equally well in very hot, very cold, or in temperate climates. Like all other ducks, however, they are very apt to be affected by thundery weather, so that "Like a dying duck in a thunderstorm" is a saying based on a natural fact.

Aylesbury is not of course the only neighbourhood from which we get our ducks. As we have already said, they are very largely bred in Ireland. Yorkshire sends a good many to the principal markets, and considerable numbers are reared near Boston in Lincolnshire and in various parts of Norfolk and Suffolk.

The turkey, especially at this season, is one of the most profitable branches of poultry-farming. In the wild state, and to some extent also as a domesticated bird, the turkey cock is said to be continually doing his best to destroy the eggs of the hen, and when the chicks appear "he never fails," says a writer well acquainted with the bird in its native haunts, "to break the skulls of all the young chicks he comes across." The hen has to be very careful to hide away her treasures. Even in the farmyard the old gobbler is often very vicious to the little ones, though sometimes he appears to be a proud and happy father. The bird, they say, eats more green food than fowls, and attains a fair size almost without any trouble, and that, if properly managed when young, about a fortnight or three weeks' fattening will bring them into the market at a cost which in ordinary seasons will permit of a handsome profit being realised. Dampness seems to be the most serious danger for young turkeys, and it is perhaps owing to the prevailing moisture of our climate that turkey-rearing is not carried on to a greater extent in this country, and seems now to be suffering serious rivalry from the continent. But on this we have already treated in the "Leisure Hour" (1859, p. 787).

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Christmas.

WHEN Noel comes, around the land

Love throws anew her sacred band;

With kindly heart and eager hand,

Old friends are meeting.

"Peace and goodwill!" the angels cried,

On one most holy Christmastide;

To-day we echo far and wide,

The same sweet greeting.

S. E. G.





AN OLD FLEMISH SEAPORT.

FEW amongst Englishmen of the present day know anything of that once great Flemish seaport, whose history and fate may be said to be briefly chronicled in the following passage: "Damme; the sometime 'Venice'—the 'Aigues-Morte' of North-West Continental Europe." Now that there is a question, however, of constructing a new harbour on the North Sea coast, communicating direct with Bruges, and so once more raising that place to the dignity and importance of a seaport, the subject again becomes one of interest for readers in this country.

The "Town of the Zwin," as Damme is also sometimes called, was, in fact, the vast *dépôt* of Flanders in the age of commercial prosperity of that once powerful country; and its decline may be considered to have not only had a share in hastening that of the province generally to which it belonged, but to have more directly precipitated the decadence of Bruges—"that Flemish Liverpool of mediæval times; after London and Novgorod the most populous commercial city of the world."

Concerning the Zwin, it is needless to say more at present than that until the construction of the Canal d'Ostende, in the seventeenth century, the gulf so named formed the sole communication Bruges possessed with the North Sea. Of Damme Macquet says, "It owed its existence to a disaster;" one of those which frequently in ancient times, but happily only of rare occurrence in modern, has overwhelmed North-West Flanders with destruction—namely, the overflowing of the sea. "I strive and keep my head above water," would indeed be very nearly as appropriate a motto for West Flanders as it is for Holland. The following, briefly, are the circumstances relating to the foundation of Damme.

In the year 1178 occurred one of the most disastrous of the many inundations on record. Great part of Holland, the group of islands known collectively as Zeeland, and North-West Flanders were under water. The "dykes of the Zwin" had been broken through or washed away in many parts, and with every returning tide the destruction of Bruges itself was threatened. The chain of dykes in question stretched from Bruges towards Cadsand, and were met at some distance therefrom by others extending to Sluys and Aardenburg. They are referred to by Dante in his "Inferno":—

"Quale i fiamminghi tra Cazzunte e Bruggia,
Temendo 'l flotto che in ver lor s'avventa
Fanno le sehermo perche'l mar ai fuggia."

The poet likens them to the barrier separating the River of Tears from the Sandy Desert.

At the time of the disaster, Philippe d'Alsace, Count of Flanders, held Florentin III, Count of Holland, prisoner in his fortress at Bruges. The

calamity hastened the negotiations then pending for the liberation of the latter, but likewise added another condition to the treaty: The Dutch (or Batavians) had already at that date acquired fame for their ability in rescuing and securing land from the sea. "It had in all times been their restless unsleeping foe." Philippe stipulated that Florentin should at once on his release—at his own cost—send a thousand workmen, "Zealanders and Frisons," to repair the dykes of the Zwin. The condition was accepted, and the count, conformably to his word, immediately on reaching his own dominions, directed the despatch of the contingent of manual labour agreed upon. These speedily repaired the mischief done, making their head-quarters whilst so doing the spot whereon subsequently rose the town of Damme. Here the workmen raised a few temporary huts, a priest established himself amongst them, two or three vendors of necessities located themselves at hand, and thus the settlement at once assumed the character of a hamlet, which in the beginning received the name of "Hondsdam;" tradition says from the fact that a dog, "sole living thing amidst a surrounding waste of water and wreck of homesteads," had sought refuge on the slight eminence selected by the labourers for their encampment. Colour is given to the legend by the fact that the arms of Damme have in all times displayed a dog in full career thereon. In recognition of the workmen's labours, or, more probably, with some astute calculation as to the advantage of retaining their services in his dominions, Philippe d'Alsace bestowed upon the hamlet, "for the use, benefit, and sole profit of the inhabitants thereof, the same to be free of all dues, taxations, exactions, etc., all those *Schorren et polders* situated between Damme and Aardenburg."

This dowerment, coupled with the fact that the ramifications of the Zwin here formed a noble natural harbour (long previously known and resorted to by the "Men of the North," Normans), attracted numbers more, both Dutch and Flemings, to the spot, and thereafter rose the famous seaport of Damme, which throughout four centuries figured prominently in the history of France, England, and Holland, in addition to that of its own Province.

It may be remarked here that, unlike Dunkirk Damme constantly pronounced itself the friend of England; but this difference is perhaps sufficiently accounted for by the fact that we never either desired or attempted to occupy the latter, whilst our aim throughout centuries was to possess ourselves of the former. Damme was both besieged and taken by us at various points of its history, but generally either in conjunction with or on behalf of the Flemings, and against the French. The first of these occasions occurred in the year 1213, in the time of King John. That monarch, with more diplomatic talent, possibly, than he is generally

credited with possessing, had averted threatened French invasion of England, by placing his dominions under the suzerainty of the Pope. The Pope, who had previously urged, now forbade the attempt, but Philippe-Auguste of France, furious at seeing his designs on England thus frustrated, resolved, in spite of Papal "Bulls," displeasure, and "Interdict," to carry out his plans with regard to this country, and all "Fiefs" held of the crown of France were summoned to assist him in so doing. "That turbulent Vassal, Flanders," however, refused to join therein; "the heart of *moult Flemings*" proclaimed itself "more English than French" ("*et tout cela pour la marchandise!*") upon this as well as upon various other occasions, and thereby drew Philippe's anger on themselves. "Either Flanders shall belong to France, or France to Flanders!" exclaimed that monarch with the accompaniment of a formidable oath, on hearing of their contumacy; and made preparations forthwith for carrying his threat into execution. Whilst he personally invaded Flanders by land at the head of an enormous army, his fleet, 1,700 vessels strong, entered the waters of the Zwin, besieged and took Damme; then, in conjunction with the troops it had landed—ten thousand men under the command of the Count de Soissons, and two hundred and forty "knights"—proceeded to pillage "that vast storehouse of the mercantile wealth of seventeen nations." The plunder chiefly selected was "the silks of China and Syria, the furs of Hungary, the cloths of Flanders, the wines of Gascony, the lead and tin of England, the red brass of Poland; finally, masses of un-wrought silver."

The news of the fall and sack of Damme reached John, who forthwith despatched a fleet of five hundred vessels, together with some troops, to the rescue. The science of navigation was already at that date far better understood by the English than any other nation, and, in what appeared an incredibly short space of time to Philippe-Auguste, then occupied in investing Ghent, he heard that the English had arrived in the Zwin, had captured four hundred of his plunder-laden vessels, burnt another hundred, and held the rest in close blockade. His wrath was fierce, and on hearing that his two hundred and forty knights had been surprised in the act of pillaging, vented itself in the usual rough fashion of that age. It should be remembered in extenuation of this offence, however, that in those days the pillage of a besieged town was very frequently the sole payment an army received in return for its services. Damme, as an opulent storehouse, suffered this reverse frequently, not only at the hands of a foreign foe, but at those of its allies, and again at those of the Flemings themselves in their internecine strifes. In this last case, however, the eventual result was not always gain to either side; for instance, upon one occasion, we read that all Flanders was taxed to furnish the sum demanded by England for the pillage of her "goods in the Port of Damme" during a revolt by the Flemings against a decree of their count's.

Philippe-Auguste at once despatched a strong force to the rescue, but this failing in wresting the town out of English hands, he hurried across country himself, accompanied by his entire army. The town was retaken, but the blockade of the French fleet maintained; and unable to rescue his ships, Philippe ordered both town and his own fleet to be set on fire, "which was incontinently and

forthwith done," in the words of a quaint chronicler. The last occasion upon which Damme was taken by the English was in 1706, under the Duke of Marlborough, in the great European coalition formed against Louis xiv.

An ancient map exhibits Damme protected by a double *enceinte* of walls, bastions, gates, towers, and moats, whilst numerous crosses denote the number of churches and religious houses contained within its walls. Other marks indicate where stood imposing private residences, groups of storehouses, the "Comptoir" of the Hanseatic League, the "Exchange" of the Lombards, civil, municipal, and other monuments. In the fourteenth century it was the strongest place in Flanders, and an idea of its semi-impregnability may be gleaned from the fact that, in 1384, the celebrated François Ackerman, at the head of fifteen hundred Gantois only, assisted by a few English archers,—"who sore grieved the enemy with their arrows"—held it for three weeks against a French army of ninety thousand men, headed by the King of France (Charles vi.) in person, and only abandoned it then in consequence of the want of fresh water. At that date Damme was supplied with fresh water by conduit from Maele, and the French had discovered this and torn up the conduit. Ackerman's retreat is matter of history, but may be repeated here. He withdrew in the night, arriving before the walls of Ghent next morning with his little garrison, without the loss of a man. If the power and importance of this "sometime 'Venice'" were great, however, they were of comparatively short duration. The fate of "Aigues-Morte" awaited and overtook it. In spite of every art then known and resorted to by man for averting the catastrophe, the steady silting up of the sand literally consumed the port of Damme before the close of the sixteenth century.

Fifty or sixty years previously, indeed, Sluys had become the veritable port of Bruges; but even here, as early as in the fifteenth century, from the same cause, namely, the withdrawal of the waters of the Zwin, in consequence of the silting up of the sand, "navigation had become as difficult as in the tempest-tossed waters of the Bay of Biscay." Nevertheless, long after Sluys had become the veritable port of Bruges, Damme continued to be the commercial citadel, so to speak, and storehouse of Flanders; and its resolution to remain such was upon various occasions contested and stubbornly fought out with Sluys. The hour came, however, also at an early date, in spite of the fact that its walls were rebuilt as recently as in the times of the "Archdukes" Albert and Isabella (1617), when it ceased to be important even as a fortified stronghold. It declined, in short, in this last character with the fading out of the importance of Flanders generally under the "dynasty" of Burgundy.

The policy of the later princes of that splendid but extravagant house was to deal with the importunate intractability of the Flemish communes by destroying their trade corporations, "always so turbulent under exaction or oppression, so redoubtable under revolt, when stirred thereto by any encroachment on their liberties and privileges;" and on the ruins, so to speak, of these to erect companies of the more peaceable, more complacent traders of Spain and Italy, "always ready to gratify those princes with loans—at *unus interest.*" The decline of Flemish influence, however, was consummated by Philippe II of Spain, whose vast possessions, it will be remembered, in-

cluded the group of Dutch and Belgian provinces,—then known, collectively, as the Pays-Bas. The memory of that monarch is thus dismissed with stern brevity by Macquet: "After ruining the prosperity of the Low Countries, and destroying the power of Spain, Philippe II died in the night of September 13th, 1598."

A "fertile plain" now marks the spot where once existed a port capable of holding a thousand sail at a time in its waters, and whence 150 vessels sometimes in one day reached and discharged their freights at Bruges; and Damme itself is a village only in size, appearance, and population, with nothing either architecturally or otherwise to tell of its past importance, except a noble church, partly in ruins, fragments of massive walls incorporated in cottage dwellings or marking garden boundaries, the ruins of one of its ancient "Gates," and its Hôtel de Ville. This last, a miniature but architectural gem, dates from the fifteenth century; and perhaps no more impressive illustration of the decadence of the place can be mentioned than the fact that, at this date, a board over the entrance announces that it is at once the Hôtel de Ville and an "Auberge!"

The stroll to Damme is one of the pleasantest in the neighbourhood of Bruges. The starting-point is the Basin, and already here something of the peculiar scent and reviving influence of the air of Holland greets you; and when once having passed the spot where anciently stood the Porte de Damme, you are fairly on your way beside the Canal de Sluys, beneath the avenue of *Archante-boomen* bordering it, these influences momentarily increase to your perception. Sluys at this date belongs to Holland, Damme to Belgium, although both geographically are Flemish. The former is situated three leagues from Bruges, the latter one. The geographical limits of Holland and Belgium, at the separation of the two countries and erection of the latter into a kingdom in 1830, were not finally settled until 1839, and various considerations, religious and political, then dictated the definitive abandonment to the former of Sluys. Damme is distinctly Catholic, but its origin, as shown, was Dutch, and there is much, both in inhabitants and place at this date, to remind the visitor of Holland. The cleanliness of both town and people is remarkable even in this country of cleanliness; and there is a singularly "well-to-do" appearance about the latter. The population is strictly agricultural now, labouring, but land is rich about here, and the peasants bear the impress of it in their dress, which is stout, warm, and comfortable, special attention being bestowed on their "foot-gear." In physique the peasant, male or female, is less heavy of aspect than the Flemings generally; more intelligent, more shrewd in expression, and yet more deliberate of speech, more grave in manner. Neither "Dammois" nor "Dammoise" strikes you as being handsome, and yet a strikingly fine face sometimes looks out at you either from beneath the flat cap of the former or the more picturesque covering of the latter. It is to be regretted, by the way, that here, too, as well as in North-West Flanders generally, the cleanly-looking picturesque white cap (often of rich lace) of the female rural classes is being rapidly superseded by ugly structures, often of gaudy colouring, called bonnets. At the "Saturday market" of Bruges many traditional costumes may still be seen, that a short time hence will probably have totally disappeared. The rich "peasant" of

the last generation adheres respectfully to the class-garb of her ancestresses; her daughter not merely discards the distinguishing lace cap of Sunday wear, but the closely-fitting print head-covering of week-day use.

It may be considered by some that a still pleasanter way of reaching Damme is by "boat," or canal barge, which upon five days a week makes the passage to and fro Sluys and Bruges, stopping at Damme *en route*. The Canal de Damme or Sluys is a deep, clear body of water, bordered on either side by avenues of the trees already named, and which are a species of poplar (or *bois blanc*), largely employed in the manufacture of sabots. Their growth is singular, and examined in detail they present a straggling, ugly appearance; but their singularity, here taking a uniform turn, presents a not unpleasing feature in the landscape: they grow straight to a certain height from the ground, then making a curve towards the water, continue a slanting growth upwards. The canal pursues a straight course, with few bends; there is only one between Bruges and Damme, about midway, and the double view presented at this point is striking in spite of its flatness. The canal now supplies the place of an arm of the Zwin, which in ancient times stretched from the port of Damme almost to the walls of Bruges.

Along the banks our English sovereign Edward IV walked, 19th of February, 1471, when events recalled him to England, after his enforced exile in the dominions of his brother-in-law Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy and Count of Flanders. Edward had been splendidly lodged in the palace of the Comte de Gruuthuyse, during his sojourn in Bruges, and preparations for his departure by state barge and all other accompanying honours had been made; but, touched by the eagerness of the crowd to obtain a farewell view of his person, says an authority, he resolved on walking the distance between Bruges and Damme. Edward, it is said, had personally endeared himself to the Flemings during his stay amongst them. There was probably as much curiosity as affection, however, moving the crowd thronging his path. Edward IV was considered to be one of the handsomest men of his age, whilst in stately height, bearing, and proportions he was unsurpassed at his own court, even by the "King-Maker" himself. The English monarch's feelings during his walk that morning must have presented a curious contrast with those filling him on his arrival in his brother-in-law's dominions some time previously. "In such grievous plight had this sovereign of a great nation been, that he had not withal to pay the sailors landing him, and so was forced to give them his doublet in pledge." The unfortunate Princess Gunehilde, sister to Harold, fled to Flanders after the battle of Hastings, on board a Bruges vessel, reaching the "harbour of the Zwin" after a passage of mingled "sorrow, danger, and terror." The "harbour of the Zwin," by the way, is mentioned by that name in the laws of Æthelred.

There are brighter English memories, however, in connection with Damme than either pillagings or sieglements, departures or arrivals of fugitive princes. The marriage of Margaret of York, sister to Edward IV, with Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, took place here, amidst such a display of magnificence that even a chronicler of modern date has filled some half-dozen pages of a not otherwise

exhaustive work on the Counts of Flanders, with the details thereof. In spite of the fact that his magnificent tastes and wars overburdened his subjects with taxation, also that he belonged to that dynasty whose impolitic irritability in dealing with the Flemish did much towards hastening the decline of Flanders, the memory of Charles the Bold of Burgundy is dear to the pride of the Flemings, as well as to that of other peoples over whom he reigned; and amply accounts for the interest with which "Quentin Durward" was received at the date of its appearance by the educated classes in various parts of the Continent.

Damme was not behind any other town of Flanders in readiness to "assert" itself, that is to say, *rebel*, upon the slightest provocation afforded for so doing. One is indeed tempted to marvel at every page of Flemish history, *not* at the early decadence of the country, but at the height of prosperity attained by Flanders and the length of its duration, remembering that revolt seemed chronic in its people.

French domination was in all times distasteful to the Flemings, whilst commercial interests drew them towards England. On the outbreak of war between the two countries, one of the earliest steps taken on both sides was an endeavour to secure the alliance of Flanders. Thus, Edward III, to determine the wavering policy of Louis de Nevers, forbade the export of wools into Flanders; "and suddenly, as if by the touch of a magician's wand, hundreds of looms stood still, and want knocked at thousands of doors." For 400 years England was a source of wealth to Flanders in this respect, more particularly to Ghent, Bruges, and, necessarily, to Damme, as the port of the latter. Our wools were dressed and woven in Flanders, and afterwards returned to us. These commercial relations naturally drew England and Flanders closely together; and it constantly happened that if the "Counts" of the latter pronounced for the French alliance, the Province saw fit to insist upon the English. We even find individual towns assuming an independent policy and action of their own in such circumstances. The Flemish trade corporations of ancient times were fighting and marching men. Ghent could send forth its army of 80,000 men; Bruges a like number. The alliance of even a single town, therefore, was of importance. The duty here, however, is to enumerate briefly the causes relating to the decadence of Damme; also of Bruges. It is not very possible, indeed, to dissociate the two. These were, in addition to those already indicated—namely, the silting up of the sand in the Gulf of Zwin, and the policy of the Houses of Burgundy and Spain—the dissolution of the Hanseatic League in the sixteenth century, and lastly, but also principally, the cessation of the woollen commerce with England. Delpierre says: "A deathblow was given to Flemish commerce in the hour that Edward III of England conceived the idea of naturalising the manufacture of woollen stuffs in England." It is true the idea, and various preliminary measures to this end, were due to Edward III, but the traffic in this commerce was of consequence to Flanders down to the time of Henry VI of England.

With regard to the Damme of to-day. So completely have all traces of its past extent and strength passed away, with the exception of those already enumerated, that the visitor finds himself almost unable to realise the fact that he stands on the site of a town once famous in European history. So remark-

able is the difference presented between the fortified town of ancient plan and written description, and the village of this date, that it can only be accounted for on the theory that the vast and massive structures of the earlier period have been utilised as "building materials" elsewhere. It has to be borne in mind that its fortifications were razed by the "Traité de la Barrière" (or "Antwerp"), in 1716.

The church of St. Mary, Damme, is now the imposing fragment only of a building once noble in proportions and collegial at its foundation. It dates from the twelfth century. The Hôtel de Ville is also well worthy a visit. The sculptured key-stones, both in the Salle du Conseil and the ground portion (crypt or vaults), now serving as stabling for cows, pigs, and poultry, are both curious and fine.

In conclusion, the remark may be hazarded that, in all probability, the Fleming is in physique at this date very much what he was in Cæsar's time. There has been no change in the race since the time of Teniers. The admirable pictures of that great delineator of Flemish rustic life present us with types offered us in any town or village of Flanders at the present day.

C. BEESTON.

FELLOW-TRAVELLERS.

THE short and swift journeys of our railroad days admit of fewer adventures by the way, and afford less opportunity for exhibiting or observing character than in olden times. A journey to the Land's End itself from London is the affair of a single summer day in the reign of Queen Victoria, but it took more than a week in the reign of Queen Anne. In the "Tatler," No. 192, for Saturday, July 1, 1710, there is an amusing account of such a journey, with reflections in Steele's best mood.

Some years since, he says, I was engaged with a coach-full of friends to take a journey as far as the Land's End. We were very well pleased with one another the first day; every one endeavouring to recommend himself by his good humour and complaisance to the rest of the company. This good correspondence did not last long; one of our party was soured the very first evening, by a plate of butter which had not been melted to his mind, and which spoiled his temper to such a degree, that he continued upon the fret to the end of our journey. A second fell off from his good humour the next morning, for no other reason, that I could imagine, but because I chanced to step into the coach before him, and place myself on the shady side. This, however, was but my own private guess, for he did not mention a word of it, nor indeed of anything else for three days following. The rest of our company held out very near half the way, when on a sudden Mr. Sprightly fell asleep; and instead of endeavouring to divert and oblige us, as he had hitherto done, carried himself with an unconcerned, careless, drowsy behaviour, until we came to our last stage. There were three of us who still held up our heads, and did all we could to make our journey agreeable; but, to my shame be it spoken, about three miles on this side Exeter, I was taken with an unaccountable fit of sullenness, that hung upon me for above threescore miles; whether it were for want of respect, or from an accidental tread upon my foot, or from a foolish maid's calling me "The old Gentleman," I cannot tell. In short, there was

but one who kept his good humour to the Land's End.

There was another coach that went along with us, in which I likewise observed that there were many secret jealousies, heart-burnings, and animosities; for when we joined companies at night I could not but take notice that the passengers neglected their own company, and studied how to make themselves esteemed by us, who were altogether strangers to them; until at length they grew so well acquainted with us that they liked us as little as they did one another.

When I reflect upon this journey, I often fancy it to be a picture of human life, in respect to the several friendships, contracts, and alliances that are made and dissolved in the several periods of it. The most delightful and most lasting engagements are generally those which pass between man and woman; and yet upon what trifles are they weakened or entirely broken? Sometimes the parties fly asunder even in the midst of courtship, and sometimes grow cool in the very honey-moon. Some separate before the first child, and some after the fifth; others continue good until thirty, others until forty; while some few whose souls are of a happier make, and better fitted to one another, travel on together to the end of their journey in a continual intercourse of kind offices and mutual endearments.

When we therefore choose our companions for life, if we hope to keep both them and ourselves in good humour to the last stage of it, we must be extremely careful of the choice we make, as well as in the conduct on our part. When the persons to whom we join ourselves can stand an examination, and bear the scrutiny; when they mend upon our acquaintance with them, and discover new beauties the more we search into their characters, our love will naturally rise in proportion to their perfections.

But because there are very few possessed of such accomplishments of body and mind, we ought to look after those qualifications, both in ourselves and others, which are indispensably necessary towards this happy union, and which are in the power of every one to acquire, or at least to cultivate and improve. These, in my opinion, are cheerfulness and constancy. A cheerful temper, joined with innocence, will make beauty attractive, knowledge delightful, and wit good-natured. It will lighten sickness, poverty, and affliction; convert ignorance into an amiable simplicity; and render deformity itself agreeable.

Constancy is natural to persons of even tempers and uniform dispositions; and may be acquired by those of the greatest fickleness, violence, and passion, who consider seriously the terms of union on which they come together, the mutual interest in which they are engaged, with all the motives that ought to incite their tenderness and compassion towards those who have their dependence upon them, and are embarked with them for life in the same state of happiness or misery. Constancy, when it grows in the mind upon considerations of this nature, becomes a moral virtue and a kind of good-nature, that is not subject to any change of health, age, fortune, or any of those accidents which are apt to unsettle the best dispositions, that are founded rather in constitution than in reason. Where such a constancy as this is wanting, the most inflamed passion may fall away into coldness and indifference, and the most melting tenderness degenerate into hatred and aversion. I shall conclude

this paper with a story that is very well known in the North of England.

About thirty years ago, a packet-boat that had several passengers on board was cast away upon a rock, and in so great danger of sinking, that all who were in it endeavoured to save themselves as well as they could; though only those who could swim well had a bare possibility of doing it. Among the passengers there were two women of fashion, who, seeing themselves in such a disconsolate condition, begged of their husbands not to leave them. One of them chose rather to die with his wife than to forsake her; the other, though he was moved with the utmost compassion for his wife, told her that, for the good of their children, it was better one of them should live than both perish. By a great piece of good luck, next to a miracle, when one of our good men had taken the last and long farewell in order to save himself, and the other held in his arms the person that was dearer to him than life, the ship was preserved. It is with a secret sorrow and vexation of mind that I must tell the sequel of the story, and let my reader know that this faithful pair who were ready to have died in each other's arms, about three years after their escape, upon some trifling disgust grew to a coldness at first, and at length fell out to such a degree that they left one another, and parted for ever. The other couple lived together in an uninterrupted friendship and felicity; and what was remarkable, the husband, whom the shipwreck had like to have separated from his wife, died a few months after her, not being able to survive the loss of her.

I must confess there is something in the changeableness and inconstancy of human nature that very often both dejects and terrifies me. Whatever I am at present, I tremble to think what I may be. While I find this principle in me, how can I assure myself that I shall be always true to my God, my friend, or myself? In short, without constancy, there is neither love, friendship, nor virtue in the world.

THE CENTENARY OF DR. CHALMERS'S BIRTH.

THIS year has been marked, especially in England, by celebrations of the centenary of the formal establishment of Sunday schools. Great meetings for that purpose have been held in London, in Manchester, in Liverpool, in other large towns and cities, and in almost every district of the country. At these meetings there has been universal expression of thankfulness and joy over the good work commenced by Robert Raikes at Gloucester about a hundred years ago, and since extended so beneficially throughout England and other countries. On these occasions the Sunday school teachers and the friends of Sunday school teaching connected with the various branches of the Christian Church have united in declaring their resolution to persevere in the work, and they have taken counsel together as to the best methods by which it may hereafter become even more efficient than it has hitherto been. And there can be no doubt that the year which has been thus distinguished will mark the commencement of a new era of advanced progress in Sunday school instruction, which shall be not English only, but international also, and last for ages to come.

While this has been going on, and Scotland has had a share in it, that country has had a commemoration of one who has exerted greater influence for good in his native land than any Scotchman since John Knox—Thomas Chalmers.

In his Visitation this autumn, the Archbishop of Canterbury made a happy reference to Dr. Chalmers. Fifty years ago he had heard him in his class-room at Edinburgh explaining the bearing of geological discovery upon the Mosaic narrative. He showed how theology had nothing to fear from true science; and it were well if the same spirit of faith as to the harmony of nature and revelation marked the Christian culture of our own day.

It is not strange that the Scottish people should celebrate the centenary of his birth. He was confessedly their greatest preacher. He was an orator of pre-eminent power. He held a most distinguished place among men of science, and philosophy, and letters. He was the strenuous advocate of all that tended to promote evangelisation at home and abroad. He was the main instrument of the evangelical revival which spread throughout Scotland and the churches most closely allied to Scotland. And while his name and his work must ever be most conspicuously identified with the Free Church in that country, his character, his genius, and his splendid services to the common cause of Christian truth and life endeared him to all the churches. In a very true and noble sense he belonged to them all; and hence representatives of them all were found in glad association, doing honour to his memory and publicly recording their gratitude to God for the rare gifts with which He had endowed him, and for the manifold blessings which had flowed from his use of them to his countrymen and to mankind.

The greatest meeting in commemoration of the centenary of his birth was held in the Free Church Assembly Hall, Edinburgh.

In a letter read to that meeting by the Rev. Sir Henry Moncrieff, Mr. Gladstone said: "There are hardly any words of admiration that could be employed concerning Dr. Chalmers to which I should scruple to subscribe. He was, indeed, one of nature's nobles, and most of the qualities which stamped him with the character were obvious, almost glaring, for all who came across his path. I do not mean merely his rich and glowing eloquence, but his warrior grandeur, his unbounded philanthropy, his strength of purpose, his mental integrity, his absorbed and absorbing earnestness. They might not be so well aware of his singular simplicity and detachment from the world, with which I remember to have been deeply struck on a particular occasion."

The Duke of Argyll wrote, saying, "I had an immense admiration for Dr. Chalmers when alive, and it has not decreased since we have been able to look back on all he was, did, and said, after an interval of thirty years."

The Rev. Dr. John Cairns, speaking of Dr. Chalmers as pre-eminently a minister of the gospel, said: "Dr. Chalmers was first a monument and then a champion of Christian faith—a faith the most simple, most Scriptural, most evangelic, such as there had been few instances of in the history of Christian preaching. As in the case of Luther, one of the few men in the Christian Church whom he would place above him, so, in the case of Chalmers, they saw in the features, in the aspect of the man, that sense of strength, that sense of conviction, that

meant that when he had once taken hold of the truth of God, nothing could turn him from it. However grand the intellectual side of Christianity might be when presented by the Christian thinker, as in the case of Luther, so in the case of Chalmers, it was the moral and spiritual side of Christianity that was greatest, and which in the end brought forth the greatest results."

The Rev. Dr. Lindsay Alexander and the Rev. Dr. Horatius Bonar, two of the oldest surviving students of Dr. Chalmers, spoke of him as a professor—the former while he was in the University of St. Andrews, the latter while in the University of Edinburgh. Dr. Alexander said that it was as a teacher that Dr. Chalmers chiefly claimed their admiration and their grateful recognition, that, being fully master of his subject, with a clear perception of what he meant to teach, grasping firmly the principles he had to inculcate, and having a great command of language and boundless power of illustration, he riveted the attention whilst he enlightened the understanding and informed the judgment of his students. Dr. Bonar said that Dr. Chalmers showed his students what it was to be candid, teachable, and large-hearted, not censorious or imperious, yet always discriminating and firm, never trifling with truth nor tampering with error, not uncharitable to the honest inquirer, yet never the apologist of doubt or a sympathiser with unbelief. As one whose affection and admiration for his great teacher had never cooled nor changed, Dr. Bonar thought he could say of him without disparagement of any, as he looked back, "He was the noblest Roman of them all;" and as he looked forward, "Take him all in all, we ne'er shall look upon his like again."

All which, the Editor of this journal, himself an old pupil of Chalmers, heartily endorses.

Varieties.

LORD COCKBURN AND THE WITNESS.—A Scotch correspondent sends the following version of the anecdote relating to Lord Cockburn (see p. 504), which he heard at the time from a lawyer. "Snuff-boxes were exchanged, I have no doubt, and Cockburn having elicited in his own way that the witness was worthy of credit, wound up the examination by asking, 'Was there onything intill him?' The reply was, 'Nae mair than was put in wi' the spoon;' and finished by 'Wad ye hae trusted him to sell a coo?' Reply, 'I wad nae hae lippened him to sell a cawf!'"

ST. JAMES OF SPAIN.—The Rev. F. Fliedner, chaplain to the German Embassy in Madrid, one of the most eminent and useful Protestant pastors in Spain, prints occasional reports of his evangelistic tours under the title, "Leaves from Spain," for the use of English and American subscribers to Spanish mission-work. In a recent number he thus introduces an account of a visit to Santiago de Compostela:—"In the picture gallery in Madrid there is a splendid picture by the celebrated Spanish painter, Murillo, representing the Apostle James, who is venerated as the patron saint of Spain, because, according to an old legend, he carried his Master's message to the ends of the earth, to Cape Finisterre in Galicia. It is a powerful face, full of expression, with a long beard grown grey in the Master's service. The right hand grasps the pilgrim's staff, ready to journey boldly on; the left presses the invaluable treasure—the open Bible—to his heart. His eye glances joyously into the distance which, with restless foot, he prepares to measure. The shell on the shoulder shows that the rough mantle is a pilgrim's garment; but the whole figure is the living incorporation of the

words, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature!" For long it has been my favourite picture, and I now have seen the temple built in honour of the apostle, in the capital of Galicia, the most ancient national relic, the fame of which has not even been eclipsed by the many temples erected in honour of the Virgin, and been on a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela."

WILLS IN SAFE CUSTODY.—Mr. Edward Preston, editor of Chambers's "Next of Kin," commenting on a recent decision of Sir James Hannen in a will case, recalls attention to the fact, certainly but little known, that there exists at Somerset House a depository for the safe custody of the wills of living persons, where, on payment of a small fee, such precious documents are safely housed. The enactment on the subject is 20 and 21 Vic. c. 77, s. 91; and, in the case of the lost will of Lord St. Leonards, Sir James Hannen, in giving judgment, regretted that the public had not availed themselves more extensively of this depository. Lost and mutilated will cases bring in a good deal of grist to the lawyers.

SELFISH PIETISM.—There are Christians enough assuredly, in our own days, in whose hearts lies a deep, though it may be an unconscious and unconfessed, selfishness. Their ears are dull to the daily cry of the needy and the oppressed, they do not hear the earnest call to join with God's advanced guard in the battle against vice and oppression and diabolic cruelty. The sacred seclusion of their homes is so sweet. They love so much their own secure and safe "retreat." And well it is they do so. Our secure and virtuous homes are the strength of the nation. It is well too that they should cherish their religious privileges, and seek to maintain spiritual peace and consolation in the uninterrupted enjoyment of those privileges. Yet a time will come when the possessors of these priceless treasures will have to give an account of their stewardship of such wealth. For an exceeding bitter cry is arising from creatures standing outside our doors, God's redeemed ones also, who have neither home nor hope on earth. Their cry rebukes our ease and our enjoyment, and our greediness of our religious privileges.—"*Life of Catharine of Siena*," by Josephine Butler. (Dyer Brothers.)

TRUST MONEY.—By 24 and 25 Vic., chap. 38, trustees were empowered to invest their trust funds in several Parliamentary securities—viz., Consols, Three per Cent. Annuities, New Three per Cent. Annuities, Bank of England Stock, East India Stock, Exchequer Bills, and £2 10s. Annuities, as well as in mortgages of freehold or copyhold estate in England and Wales. Professor Leone Levi, referring to Mr. Gladstone's proposed reduction of interest for deposits in Trustee Savings Banks, suggests that if similar powers were granted to trustee savings banks, the produce of the securities would amply suffice for the maintenance of the present rate of interest. Foreign savings banks have great latitude of power in the mode of investing their funds, and they do invest largely in real property, mortgages, loans to municipalities, and the like. The object of any restriction in the investments is to secure the safety of the deposits, but surely there are securities producing more than 3 per cent., nearly as safe as Consols, which Parliament might legitimately authorise in the same manner as in the case of ordinary trustees.

LORD LAWRENCE MEMORIAL.—Sir William Muir states that several rajahs in Upper India have warmly responded to the circular of the Lawrence Memorial Fund. From Benares his Highness Maharajah Isree, G.C.S.I. (who erected the beautiful fountain in Hyde Park), sends 1,000 rupees, and Rajah Shiva Pershad, C.S.I., 50 rupees. The Maharajah of Benares (as translated from his Urdu letter) writes:—"Most certainly let there be a memorial worthy of Lord Lawrence. Dean Stanley, in his speech, said that the lamented statesman was before all things a God-fearing man. Truly this was the secret of all his virtues. I send a money order for £100, which pray make over to the Lord Mayor, that it may be added to the Memorial Fund." Another contributor, Rajah Sheoraj Singh, C.S.I., of Kasheepore (writing in English), says:—"We learnt with deep regret the lamentable death of Lord Lawrence, the ablest and the most wise of the rulers India ever had. His impartial justice and wise administration are so deeply impressed on our hearts that they can scarcely be effaced. It must be our duty, therefore, to pay our tribute of honour to the memory of so eminent a statesman, who restored peace to our country and happiness to its people in one of its most critical moments, and strengthened the ties of union of England with India by the display of unparalleled wisdom, foresight, justice, and courage."

It is gratifying to find that noblemen of Upper India (unconnected with his old province, the Punjab) retain so lively and grateful a remembrance of the great and good man whose name we all desire worthily to commemorate.

TAIF IN ARABIA.—The Rev. Robertson Smith, in his letters from Arabia, gives the following account of the diet and cookery of the Arabs of Taif: "After I had seen the orchards, which to the Arabs are the great sight of Taif, and had also conscientiously visited a garden in which an enterprising Egyptian raises European vegetables from seed brought from France, I was held to have 'done' the place, and my host's only further care was to give me plenty to eat. I had, at all events, full opportunity to make acquaintance with a characteristic local cuisine. The Taif people have three meals a-day, but I struck off the midday repast, as otherwise the whole day would have been lost. For, whenever one wished to go out, the answer was, 'Wait a little while, you must have something to eat first.' I cannot tell you the programme of a Taif dinner. Sweets, vegetables, and joints are mingled in an extraordinary confusion, for which it is impossible to find a law. But a few general principles were discernible. The meal should end with a dish of stewed rice, which may or may not be accompanied by sweet pastry or vermicelli. A great dinner has for its *pièce de résistance* an entire sheep stewed or baked with *samm* (clarified butter), and stuffed with rice, eggs, and almonds. On lesser occasions one eats roast fowls and a variety of stews. Several large bowls of sour milk are always on the table, and of this the natives eat a great deal. At breakfast one begins with Areeka, or with a sort of porridge prepared with milk and *samm* and made very rich. Eggs fried with vegetables are another favourite dish. Besides these, there is probably a plate of muffins soaked in honey and *samm*, or a bowl of *samm* and honey mixed in which the bread is dipped—the butter and honey of the old Testament. The most characteristic and also the most trying dish to a stranger is called Hareesa. This is a local food, prepared by boiling grits along with meat, and beating up the compound with a wooden spatula till it becomes a uniform paste. It is eaten with *samm*, sometimes with sugar, and has a very strong taste. The great feature of Taif cookery is the superabundance of *samm*. The people even drink it by the bowl. I ought perhaps to tell how it is made. The milk stands overnight, with the addition of a little sour milk as a ferment. In the morning it is skimmed, and the cream is shaken in a skin. It is then boiled for a long time, and strained several times. When well prepared, it will last at least a year without spoiling. The best products of Taif are the preserved fruits in syrup.

RENOVATING CLOTHES.—An excellent black re-dyer is made with 1 lb. bruised galls; 2 lb. logwood; $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. green vitriol; and 5 quarts of water. Boil all together for two hours and then strain. With a piece of sponge apply the mixture lightly and evenly cover the surface of the cloth, and then hang the clothes out in the open air to dry. A dull breezy day is preferable to a sunny one. To remove grease stains from cloth: Moisten the stains with a few drops of concentrated solution of sub-carbonate of potash, rub the parts between the fingers, and then wash the cloth with a little warm water, or saturate the part affected with warm water, and sop it up with a sponge, repeat this until the place is free of soap, and then press a soft cloth on it to absorb the moisture, and dry in the open air.—*The Oracle*.

SHIPWRECKS.—A Blue Book gives a list of British ships which have been reported to the Board of Trade as having foundered or as missing between the 1st of January, 1873, and the 16th of May, 1880, together with summaries showing the number and tonnage of the ships lost in each year, the trades in which they were engaged, the description of cargo with which they were laden, and the number of lives lost. The grain-laden vessels lost within this period were 256, with a tonnage of 182,536, and the lives lost where 2,443. Of coal-laden vessels 534 were lost, tonnage 196,974, and 2,779 lives. Of vessels laden with metals and metallic ores, 124 were lost, tonnage 33,808, with a sacrifice of 369 lives. Of timber-laden ships 178 were lost, tonnage 84,290, and 675 lives. Of vessels laden with other cargoes 518 were lost, tonnage 141,661, with a loss of 1,855 lives. Under the head of "General" the number of vessels lost was 162, with a tonnage of 85,025, and 2,106 lives. Of vessels in ballast 183 have been lost, tonnage 51,669, and 496 lives. The unknown are ten in number, tonnage 3,231, and 104 lives. The total number of vessels lost was 1,965, tonnage 729,194, and no fewer than 10,827 lives. This forms, however, but a small proportion of the losses of life and property through the perils of the sea.